



NASHUA POLICE DEPARTMENT

PRESS RELEASE

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Chief Michael Carignan

For Immediate Release:

A statement on the untimely passing of Captain Jonathan Lehto from Nashua Police Chief Michael Carignan:

On September 9, 2019, the Nashua Police Department learned that Captain Jonathan Lehto died by suicide while visiting family in Seattle, WA. Jon's family and the members of the Nashua Police Department are shocked and saddened by this tragic event.

Jon grew up in Nashua, attended Nashua schools, and graduated from Nashua High School in 1990. Jon next attended Boston University and received his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1994. Jon continued his education at Boston University School of Law, where he received his Juris Doctor in 1997. He was later admitted to the New Hampshire Bar Association.

From early on, Jon wanted to be a police officer. In 1999 he was hired by the Nashua Police Department and attended the 118th New Hampshire Police Academy. Upon graduation and his FTO period, Jon spent several years in the Patrol Division. He was transferred to the Detective Bureau where he spent much of his time handling juvenile related matters, sexual assault investigations, and other complex cases. Jon's leadership, knowledge, and demeanor earned him a promotion to Sergeant. He was a skillful and well-regarded patrol supervisor and detective supervisor. Jon helped guide both Nashua police officers and detectives before his transfer to the Legal Bureau. Jon prosecuted cases for the Nashua Police Department and quickly became a respected police prosecutor with a reputation as someone who was easy to work with. Jon was considered a colleague by Judges, public defenders, and other attorneys. During his assignment in Legal, Jon exhibited an exceptional work ethic and was promoted to Lieutenant. Jon's legal expertise allowed him to provide valuable guidance to his fellow officers as well as the Nashua Police Department's Executive Office.

Jon was recently promoted to Captain and took command of the Nashua Police Department's Detective Bureau. His willingness to accept and excel at stressful and challenging assignments made him a perfect fit.

Jon's personnel file is filled with numerous letters received from members of the community as well as local organizations who took the time to express their gratitude for Jon's professionalism, his compassion, and his work ethic. While Jon oversaw the Nashua Police Crime Scene Unit, it was Jon's time spent as a member of SWAT that meant so much to him.



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Additionally, Jon received two Commendation Bars for Distinguished Unit Action, an employee recognition award, and Exchange Club Officer of the Year. Jon's most notable recognition was the Dr. Roger M. Fossom Award from the NH Attorney General's Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect, which honors individuals who have made an outstanding commitment to collaborative multidisciplinary efforts to improve services to children affected by abuse and neglect in New Hampshire.

We at the Nashua Police Department were stunned to learn Jon died by suicide. Jon ended his life early and we don't know why. We are all left with questions which may never be answered. In addition to his wife, his family and friends, and his NPD family, Jon left behind an unblemished record. His awards, his accomplishments, and his reputation amongst his peers are reflective of his 20 years of exemplary service.

With the support of Jon's family, we want to share the circumstances of his death. Suicide is a national issue which does not exclude the first responder community. Only recently has it become more openly acknowledged and discussed. Jon's death by suicide proves we must deal with this truth. Moving forward, we do not want anyone else to feel as though they are locked into this decision.

Jon's family, friends, and co-workers have a grieving process to go through. We have established a peer support group for our employees and we will continue to provide that support for as long as necessary.

Everyone at the Nashua Police Department is grateful for the unwavering support provided by the community, local businesses, colleagues, and our first responder partners. Your support is what helps get us through these days of grief while we support Jon's family, honor his wishes, and still do our jobs.

The Nashua Police Department and Jon's family acknowledge that suicide amongst law enforcement and other first responders is an epidemic. Jon's suicide forced us to face the fact that we are not immune to this reality. We are committed to being vocal in an effort to bring attention to and make others aware of this crisis. Jon spent his career helping people. We are hopeful that by not remaining silent about Jon's death by suicide, we can honor who he truly was and encourage others to reach out for help.

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